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'Butt out,' says U.S. to Soviets

By Steve Neal

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WASHINGTON—President Reagan asserted Wednesday that the Soviet Union should "butt out" of the British-Argentine confrontation over the Falkland Islands. At the same time, he said the United States was "still trying to be a fair broker in this and bring peace."

After a meeting with Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Reagan said that "ideas have been presented which are being seriously considered on both sides." He said Haig is returning to Buenos Aires to seek a peaceful settlement.

During a question-and-answer session in the Rose Garden, Reagan declined to comment when asked to confirm reports that the U.S. was helping the British fleet in the South Atlantic.

"The situation is so critical that any comment might endanger the peacekeeping process," Reagan said.

WHEN ASKED about reports that Russia was providing intelligence to Argentina on British fleet movements, the President said it was "evidently established" that the Soviets were doing this. "I'd like to see them butt out," Reagan said.

The President would not say what options had been discussed in his hour-long meeting with Haig. "Peace is our common cause," he said.

"From the outset, we've made clear our wish to assist in finding a basis for resolution of this difficult issue," the President said.

Asked about Haig's chances to achieve a settlement between the two nations, Reagan said only, "We should all be hoping and we should all be praying."

THE STATE Department would neither confirm nor deny published reports that the U.S. is providing intelligence and communications information to Britain. Other administration officials however, have acknowledged that the U.S. is providing such help. The President refused to discuss the question.

State Department spokesman Rush Taylor said the U.S. is providing intelligence to the British at Ascension Island in the mid-Atlantic under a U.S.-British agreement.

Administration officials charged Tuesday that the Soviet Union is giving Argentina intelligence data from satellites and intercepts of radio communications about the movements of the British fleet.

IN HIS MEETING with reporters, Reagan also expressed confidence that Israel would turn over the remainder of occupied Sinai territory to Egypt on April

25 as provided in the Camp David accords.

Reagan said Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin had assured him "that the turnover is going to occur" and that peace talks were "going forward."

The President said he would have nothing to do with any effort to "discipline" Republican congressmen and senators who have voted against some of his policies.

On Tuesday, Reagan's White House political director, Edward J. Rollins, had suggested that independent Republicans might face disciplinary action from the White House and congressional leaders.

"No, I don't agree with that," Reagan said. "I intend to support as many Republican candidates as I can this year."

Reagan said he deplored intraparty punishment and strong-arm methods. "I've never used that," he said. "I've never used anything but to try to persuade them to my way of thinking."